

New chair of Edinburgh law firm says the firm will remain fully independent

The new chair of Anderson Strathern, one of Edinburgh's oldest law firms, says that the firm will continue to earn strong revenue and grow its profit, but has "No ambitions to join up with any UK or international practices – we will remain fully independent".

Fraser Geddes has been with the firm for just over 12 years says that the focus will be on growth however. He said: "“I see the firm continuing to grow its income from south of the Border and overseas – as well as within Scotland – in a legal marketplace that is more focussed on offering value for money than at any other time in my career. The public and private sectors and corporate clients are all fighting ongoing inflationary pressures.”"

The firm which is about to move into new premises in Capital Square in the Exchange District looks set to announce strong financial results. Geddes said: "The economy remains challenging, certainly but I don't expect the current recessionary clouds to linger as long as many people have feared."

But there have been many changes in the legal profession

during his career. He said: "It's modernising, engaging with the very latest technology to better serve clients. We have moved from being consulted only when something needs verified or a statutory process completed, or when a client is in trouble – to a place where a lawyer must be infinitely more proactive in leading honest conversations about how best they can meet and hopefully exceed client expectations, on all fronts.

"Today, legal expertise is a given; the letter of the law will be taken care of. The difference between good and great lawyers, is being able to develop and nurture relationships.

"If the property industry is about 'location, location, location,' the legal profession in 2023 is about 'relationships, relationships, relationships' – and Anderson Strathern is very good at that."

Even though the practice will be based in shiny new offices, the new Chair believes that remote working will continue to feature in the mix. He said: "We maintained our levels of business, performance, and team spirit during the pandemic. As a firm, we proved enormously resilient and innovative throughout, and working remotely proved an important part.

"We were among the first law firms to completely embrace remote/agile working, which meant when the pandemic hit, we were able to cope with the strains which proved so hard for other firms and companies.

"Taking two floors in Capital Square in the heart of Edinburgh is a visible statement of our commitment in that regard. There is space for around 75% of our staff at any one time, so there will be no 3-line whip in terms of staff returning to the workplace full-time."

As full-time chair, Mr Geddes says he will become the "external face of the firm, drive and lead its strategic aims and ensure the firm is operating properly and efficiently."

In his first 100 days, he expects to meet every one of the 51 partners face-to-face and make an appearance at all the firm's regular departmental meetings.

Anderson Strathern has 51 partners, 166 fee earners and 282 members of staff.



Fraser Geddes Chair Anderson Strathern PHOTO – Chris Watt
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