Minister Patrick O’Donovan commends Fingal’s progress in digital services during visit to Blanchardstown Library

Minister of State for Public Procurement, Open Government and eGovernment, Patrick O’Donovan, TD, visited Fingal County Council’s Blanchardstown Library to witness the progress being made in the provision of digital library services on Wednesday, November 29.

During a tour of Blanchardstown Library, Minister O’Donovan was shown the latest online resources made available to users to allow them to access library services in a faster, more efficient way.

These include computer, internet and printing services, self-service borrowing and returning stations as well as online libraries to allow users to access books and services from their homes. There was also discussion regarding the opportunity to make services such as passport and driver’s licence applications available at local libraries.

During his visit to Blanchardstown Library, Minister O’Donovan said that there is potential for other Local Authorities to widen their digital services to the extent that Fingal has.

“Today we have been looking at the assisted technologies available for government and how government can best use technology to widen its remit of services. I’m certainly really impressed with what I’ve seen here and it gives me an opportunity to look within government and see how other local authorities can use the technology available here and the best practices available here to work with government, our departments and our state agencies to make sure that we can bring services and the government closer to the people,” said Minister O’Donovan.
Also in attendance was Fingal County Council’s Chief Executive, Paul Reid. He was delighted to demonstrate to Minister O’Donovan how Fingal have embraced digital assisted government services.

“We had a very good discussion about digital services for which the minister has government responsibility for. We were able to outline how we at Fingal County Council feel there is a real opportunity to devolve further services from Central Government to Local Government. An example of this is the passport application process, the national driver’s license service and other services we believe can be devolved to Local Authorities,” said Mr Reid.

Fingal County Librarian Betty Boardman described the popularity of digital services during the tour given to Minister O’Donovan.

“Digital library services have already proven to be very popular among the public who use them to upload pictures and print a CV or an airline ticket. The widening of these services would also increase footfall in libraries which would of course be very welcome. Blanchardstown Library footfall is about 1,300 a day so it is the busiest in the country. We would like people to have a very immersive experience when they come to any of our libraries and would like the technology to be there for them to use the same way it is used in a shop, self-service counters being an example. There would also be continued help from staff who are always available to advise library users,” said Ms Boardman.

Following the discussion about widening digital assisted government services, Head of IT at Fingal County Council, Dominic Byrne, said: “We are looking forward to working with the Minister and Government’s Chief Information Officer on projects that will help make digital technologies and services more readily available. This is a really exciting opportunity for Fingal to be at the forefront in making digital assisted services increasingly available in local libraries.”

The Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Mary McCamley, was also present for the Minister’s visit to Blanchardstown Library and afterwards she said: “Blanchardstown Library is the busiest in the county and offers many valuable services to Fingal residents. I would be delighted to see the development of further digital services being put in place as I know they would be hugely appreciated and widely utilised.”

ENDS

For further enquiries, please contact press@fingal.ie