

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 28 2011
FROM:	JEFF FIELDING CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT:	BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE AND CENTRE FOR COMMERCIALIZATION OF DIGITAL INTERACTIVE GAME TECHNOLOGY

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer, the following actions with respect to the proposed Business Enterprise Centre and Centre for Commercialization of Digital Interactive Game Technology:

- a) the concept as detailed in the report of the Chief Administrative Officer, dated September 28 **BE ENDORSED** in principle; and
- b) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to enter into discussions with the proposed partner organizations to develop a formal business case for Council's consideration as a part of the broader Service London implementation strategy.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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Report to Finance and Administration Committee, May 18, 2011 – Service London

BACKGROUND

Council recently endorsed a new concept called Service London, and umbrella framework encompassing numerous service delivery initiatives (see [Appendix A](#)). One of these initiatives is a proposed Business Enterprise Centre. This concept was also a recommendation in the Mayor's Economic Prosperity Council report released in June 2011.

There is an opportunity to pair the concept of a Business Enterprise Centre with the Centre for Commercialization of Digital Interactive Game Technology. Council has previously placed funding in reserve for this initiative pending the submission of a business plan.

This report provides an overview of each of these two concepts, and outlined proposed next steps should Council wish to pursue this opportunity.

Business Enterprise Centre

The concept of a Business Enterprise Centre is to provide one-stop access to business related services. Business customers will have the ability to interact with a variety of services provided by multiple organizations (see [Appendix B](#)) in a shared facility. These services could include:

- Integrated delivery of business-focused municipal services (development approvals, building permits, business licensing, various other permits and licenses, etc.)
- Provincial government business services delivered through ServiceOntario
- Information on government grants, subsidies, research and development grants, incentives
- Site selection services for new, expanding or relocating businesses
- Access to market data and local community knowledge
- Commercialization advice and supports
- Advice on starting a new business, developing a business plan or growth strategies

- Private sector services such as financial or legal advice, or angel investment

Based on this list of services, there are numerous potential partner organizations that could be co-located in the Business Enterprise Centre with the City of London including Service Ontario, the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), WORLDiscoveries, various sector-specific business organizations, and private sector services.

Centre for Commercialization of Digital Interactive Game Technology (CDiGiT)

In December 2010, LEDC reported to Committee of the Whole with several key initiatives that could be funded from the Economic Development Reserve Fund. One initiative was a proposed Digital Media Centre of Excellence. This proposal was one of 10 shortlisted applications in Canada for a new Centre of Excellence, and the only proposal specific to digital media. The proposal ultimately was not successful, but the concept continues to have both community and private sector support.

On December 20, 2010 Council resolved to place funding for this concept in reserve pending the submission of a business plan. The concept has since been rebranded as the Centre for Commercialization of Digital Interactive Game Technology (CDiGiT) and LEDC is in the process of completing a business case for Council's consideration, with the intention that CDiGiT would be a tenant of the Business Enterprise Centre should Council endorse with this concept.

Benefits

The Business Enterprise Centre, including CDiGiT as a tenant, would be a pillar of innovation and economic growth for the City of London. It is an opportunity to forge new partnerships that would benefit the business community, the digital media industry, local residents and the Corporation.

The Business Enterprise Centre will significantly benefit new and existing businesses by improving the delivery of services to business customers:

- Simple – a convenient location to make it easier for business to access services
- Seamless – integrated service delivery whenever possible
- Convenient – providing one-stop access to numerous services
- Efficient – for both a user and service provider
- Effective – providing a platform for improved service delivery

The Business Enterprise Centre will be an energy centre to turn an idea into a business plan; assist with securing approvals and licenses; have access to the business enablers; and business plans. It will attract new and grow existing businesses by ensuring that the business community is aware of and has access to the various supports available. Finally, it will communicate to the community and beyond the Corporation's commitment to being "Open for Business".

CDiGiT will anchor the relationship between the business community and the digital media industry, and facilitate new synergies between this and other industry sectors. CDiGiT will build on London's growing digital media cluster and continue to grow the city as a leader in gaming and development. It also would provide an opportunity to support young entrepreneurs and new start up companies.

Additionally, the various business services listed above are currently provided in numerous leased and owned locations where decisions need to be made in the near future about the location of those services. LEDC's lease will be expiring in the near future and the Corporation is currently examining long-term solutions to the space shortage at City Hall. The Business Enterprise Centre may assist in solving these and other space issues.

Finally, there is evidence that co-location partnerships create an environment for new synergies and innovations to occur. There are numerous examples of this in Canada and internationally (MaRS Discovery District or the Centre for Social Innovation, both in Toronto). Although the primary purpose of the Business Enterprise Centre will be one-stop access to business services, it could ignite new opportunities for partnership between business service providers by developing closer linkages and awareness between these organizations.

Next Steps

As noted in an accompanying Service London report, Civic Administration is reporting back with a three-year implementation plan of all initiatives within the Service London framework by January 2012. As a part of this overarching strategy, recommendations on a process to establish a Business Enterprise Centre including the Centre for Commercialization of Digital Interactive Game

Technology will be presented early in 2012.

In order to move forward with this work, this report recommends that this concept be endorsed and that Civic Administration be directed to enter into discussions with potential partners. LEDC would be actively involved in all discussions. Partner organizations may be requested to enter in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Corporation to confirm their interest in pursuing the Business Enterprise Centre and Digital Media Centre of Excellence model. An Expression of Interest may also be used to identify other potential partner organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

The Corporation is committed to its mission of “At Your Service: A respected and inspired public service partner”. The Business Enterprise Centre and Centre for Commercialization of Digital Interactive Game Technology will be a legacy initiative that can transform the way that services are delivered to business in London, as well as provide a platform for energy, innovation and synergies. It represents a new era of partnership and integration of service delivery, and marks London as community that is open for business. It also furthers the objectives of Council’s already endorsed Service London framework to integrate and align the various initiatives aimed to improve service delivery. The Business Enterprise Centre is an important part of the overarching Service London strategy.

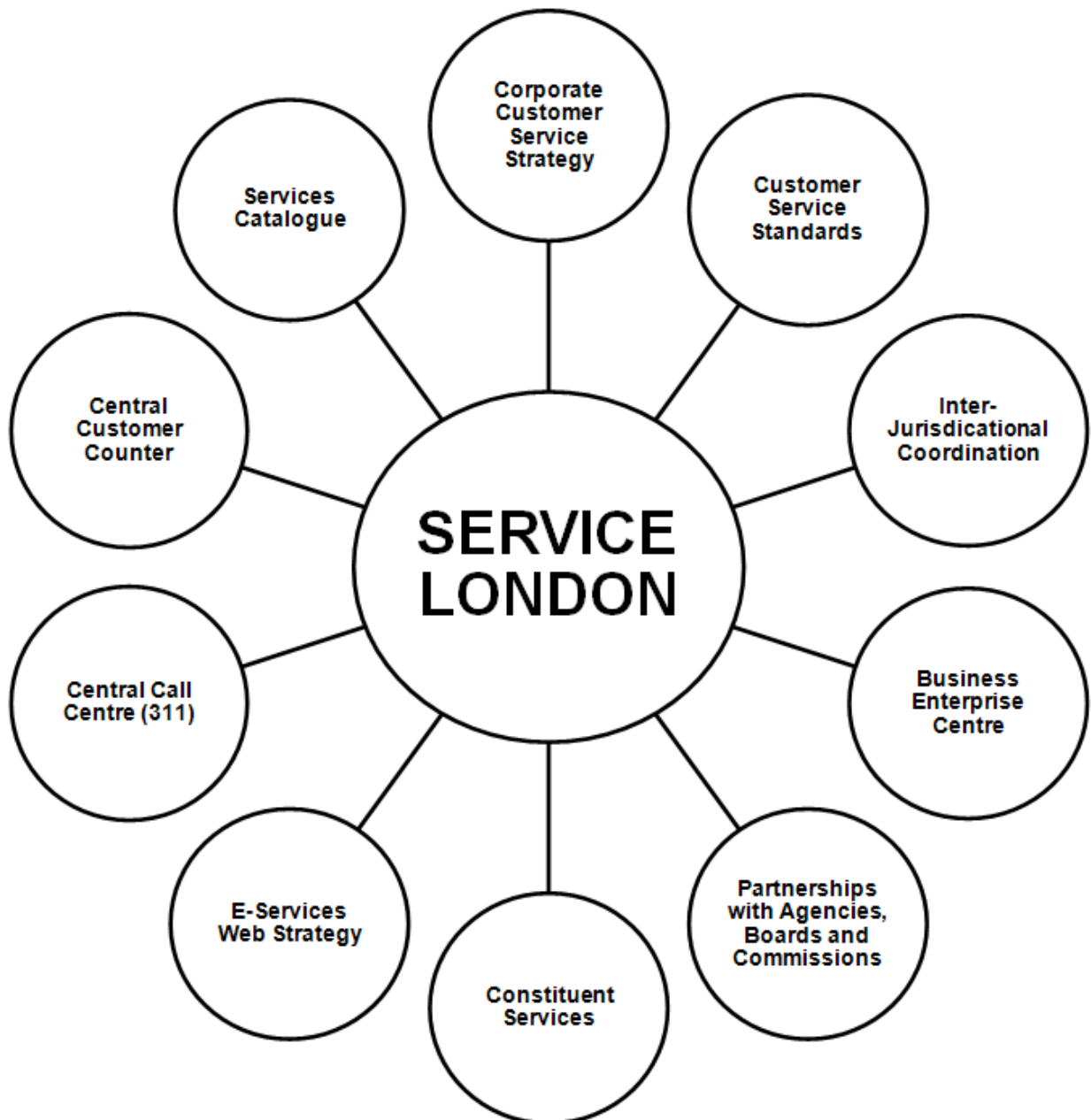
Regular reports will be provided to Council as this work progresses.

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RECOMMENDED BY:
JEFF FIELDING CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

APPENDIX A
Service London Framework

(endorsed by Council in May 2011)



APPENDIX B
Potential Partners in a Business Enterprise Centre

(proposed for Council endorsement)

