

The Causey project was originally conceived by ARCADE Architects and included as part of the SIX CITIES Design Festival 2007. Following consultation and a creative ideas workshop, the local community decided to transform the busy traffic island into a tropical island and space for people. The event ran from 26-28 May 2007 and was hugely enjoyed by over 500 people per day. The temporary project was so successful that it won an award and inspired members of the local community to form The West Crosscauseway Association (WCCA) – now known as The Causey Development Trust – in order to develop more ideas and transform the space permanently.

By 2010 they had held more workshops and carried out a consultation, but all they asked was should the area be stepped or sloped? Proposals at that stage had some details, but it wasn't until this year that we saw the final details in TRO and RSO form. Some of the details had changed from 2010, and what is now proposed has come up against quite a bit of opposition, especially from the local residents.

You can see from the plan that the east end of WCC becomes a cul de sac, which cuts out the through traffic, but still allows deliveries to the shops. For some reason this plan excludes residents' parking, which in 2010 they promised to retain. Although they say HGVs will be banned, the plans actually allow vehicles of up to 7.9 m, or 26 feet, to come in. One of the points that local residents have made is the difficulty of turning a vehicle of this size in the space available. People have said that with two way traffic (albeit a much reduced amount of traffic) it will be difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to make their way through safely.

Also on the plan you will see the reduced width of Chapel Street, which involves the loss of the cycle lanes, forcing cyclists to join the main traffic flow, and become, in effect, human traffic calming. The bus stops are also removed, which many people have objected to.

The Causey Development Trust always says it is open to suggestions, and has consulted widely, but judging by the opposition to the TRO and RSO proposals, they have misjudged the local mood, and have failed to get people to catch their vision. In their plans the east end of the street becomes a shared space, with no kerbs, which is something that we are not used to in the UK, and many people think it just wouldn't work.

There are alternative plans which maintain one way through traffic, but much reduced, by banning right turns in or out of the street, and allowing closure at times to make the big space available for events of some kind.