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Banks that have been helped by the tax payer after the financial crash and are the last remaining bank in rural communities should have a legal responsibility to ensure access to banking provisions are in place, Scottish Conservative MP Luke Graham said.

The Campaign for Community Banking Services produced an estimate of the number of unbanked communities, which stated 1500 communities have lost all access to their banks.

Today Mr Graham successfully introduced a Ten Minute Rule Bill to the House of Commons to amend the law relating to rural banking and small communities.

The Banking and Post Office Services (rural areas and small communities) bill will make provisions to place the Access to Banking Standard onto a statutory footing; to place a duty on a closing bank to provide a community investment fund from those banks which has received significant tax-payer assistance in the aftermath of the last economic crash; and to strengthen the provision of post office services for rural and small communities across the UK.

The bill will also seek to establish a Community Fund of £100,000 for each branch closure of tax payer owned banks to help support the communities and customers they are abandoning.

Commenting the MP for Ochil and South Perthshire, Luke Graham said:

“The treatment of our rural communities by our banks, especially those such as RBS, that have been bailed out by the British tax payer, is an injustice.

“In some parts of my constituency, those with no access to their own vehicle are expected to make a 50 plus mile, 2 hour round trip by bus to access their bank. This is hardly going to become more bearable as we head into the cold months of winter in Scotland.

“For any further closures, a rural weighting should be added to ensure the local Post Office has the resources to cope, and that local geography, weather patterns, public transport, broadband and mobile coverage is considered. It would give additional heft to hold the banks to account and ensure rural communities are not deserted.

“When banks and institutions have accepted public funding, they must accept it comes with public responsibilities. We cannot have rural and small communities being abandoned, we cannot have a two-speed UK, which is why I am delighted the bill has passed its first stage.”