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The Tay Cities Deal is an opportunity to improve rural broadband, Scottish Conservative MPs Kirstene Hair and Luke Graham have said.

Ms Hair and Mr Graham's respective constituencies have some of the worst broadband speeds in Scotland. The Scottish Government have been responsible for the roll-out of broadband and continually missed their own targets. An Audit Scotland report, Superfast broadband for Scotland further progress, has stated it is unlikely the Scottish Government will reach their 100% of R-100. This has left rural parts of the Tay Cities region without sufficient broadband speeds.

The UK Government have committed the next round of funding to go directly to local authorities in Scotland instead of the Scottish Government. The Scottish Conservative MPs are calling for broadband funding to be included in the Tay Cities Deal to help speed up the roll-out to rural areas.

Commenting MP for Angus Kirstene Hair said:

"A decent broadband connection is not a luxury but a necessity for both personal and business use. In Angus we have a large number of rural businesses – not just in farming – but across a spectrum of industries. In order for these to thrive, they require an acceptable broadband speed.

"Rural areas have lost faith in the Scottish Government to deliver on their promise of R100 by 2021. It has got to the stage that the Scottish Government are in fact holding back rural areas which is why I believe the Tay Cities Deal is an opportunity for the UK government to step in and fix this SNP failure.

"I cannot overestimate the economic boost which would come to the area with the correct broadband infrastructure in place and hope our intervention will support the real needs of our rural communities whilst the SNP continue to focus on the central belt."

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

“So many of our villages and small communities fall into the small percentage that are excluded from government broadband schemes. There is a real risk of rural communities being left behind and put at a disadvantage compared to those living in urban areas.

“It is unacceptable that people are missing out on the digital revolution because of where they live. Funding for rural broadband in the Tay Cities Deal will help address this issue and ensure our rural economy can be as vibrant as the urban economy.”