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The SNP is “stalling” on its pledge to provide access to superfast broadband for all homes and businesses by 2021, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Opposition MSPs tabled a series of parliamentary questions seeking updates on progress with the Reaching 100 (R100) plans.

However, the SNP government has provided holding responses on every occasion.

Paul Wheelhouse, minister for energy, connectivity and the islands, has failed to answer a question on when a contractor will be announced for the R100 programme for nearly eight weeks now.

Another question on what action is being taken by the government to ensure superfast broadband access to all homes is delivered by the end of 2021 has not been answered.

Finlay Carson, Galloway and West Dumfries MSP and Scottish Conservative digital economy spokesman, accused the SNP of “dodging scrutiny” on the issue.

He said: “The R100 programme was launched with great fanfare by the SNP government – and ministers repeatedly talk up the promise to provide superfast broadband access to all.

“However, SNP ministers appear to be stalling and are unable to answer basic questions.

“It is concerning that a contractor has not yet been appointed to carry out this work – something that was supposed to happen in the early part of this year.

“An Audit Scotland report last year said the government was ‘unlikely’ to meet its target to reach all homes and business in Scotland by 2021.

“If the timetable will not be met, then SNP ministers should stop dodging

scrutiny and be honest with parliamentarians and with the public.

“People living in rural areas of Scotland are already at risk of being left behind when it comes to digital connectivity. They will rightly expect more urgency from the SNP government.”