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1997 discussion 'not for boards'

The 1997 issue should not be discussed at district board level until some solid announcement has first been made by the two parties negotiating the future of Hongkong.

That is the opinion of four of the five elected members of the Sai Kung District Board.

Mr Wan Yuet-kau told reporters after yesterday's meeting that he and his three colleagues would try to contact other district board members to discuss the ways and means of sounding out public opinion on the future of Hongkong.

"We have already received a lot of feedback from the public through the meet-the-public scheme," Mr Wan said.

"But since we have no idea of the contents of the talks, it is appropriate for members to keep discussions behind closed doors.

"The Government always says it is taking public opinion into account, but it seems it is only taking what it wants to hear."

Mr Wan noted that many people had doubts about the effectiveness of district boards — especially when some of the boards are all but ignored on some issues.

"If the Government continues to ignore the view of the boards, the public will soon lose their confidence in elected members and members' representation will shrink," he said.