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16 board members for Peking

Sixteen elected New Territories district board members have enrolled in a mission to Peking next month to discuss the future of Hongkong.

There will be three participants each from Taipo, Yuen Long, Sai Kung, Shatin and the North District, and one from Tuen Mun.

The role of district boards after 1997 is one of the issues the visitors will take up with senior Chinese officials during their visit.

The Peking trip, the first by district board members, who represent public opinion at the grassroots level, is reported to have the blessing of the local branch of the New China News Agency.

Members had a preliminary discussion about the trip on Monday and they will meet again to pool their views and compile an opinion paper to present to the Chinese Government.

Their trip was originally scheduled for November 7 but is to be postponed briefly pending arrangement by the NCNA.

Among the leaders district board members would like to meet in Peking are Mr Xi Zhongxun, a politburo member and vice-chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress.

Mr Xi is also a former governor of Guangdong province and has a thorough understanding of Hongkong.

Members also said they hope to meet the man in charge of Hongkong affairs in China, Mr Ji Pengfei, during their week-long visit.